

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for routing a communications request to help facilitate a call between a user and a desired recipient by making use of an intermediary agent ("agent"), the method comprising:

receiving said communications request from a user, wherein said communications request includes a request to ultimately reach said desired recipient;

retrieving a set of preferences associated with said user;

retrieving profile data related to a plurality of agents who may respond to said communications request; ~~and~~

selecting a specific agent from said plurality of agents based on said set of preferences and said profile data, wherein said specific agent possesses attributes consistent with at least a portion of the set of preferences and profile data; and

routing said communications request to said specific agent, who is able to receive said communications request and facilitate said call.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein receiving said communications request includes receiving said requests via a communications network.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said communications network is a telephone network, the Internet, or a private network.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said set of preferences associated with said user includes one or more of the following:

a language preference;

a communications-type preference, wherein said communications-type preference includes a preference to communication via voice, tele-type (TTY) device; or imaging;

a target-destination preference;

a call type;

a communication mode, and

an agent gender.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein retrieving profile data includes retrieving data associated with one or more of the following attributes:

a language proficiency;

a gender;

a speaking rate;

a speaking style;

a typing speed; and

a desired attribute.

6.-7. (cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) One or more computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions embodied thereon for performing a method of facilitating communications between a an initiator and a ~~receiver~~desired recipient by making use of an intermediary agent ("agent"), said method comprising:

receiving a request to initiate said communication from said initiator;

providing a profiles database that stores a set of attributes associated with one or more of a plurality of agents;

extracting source information from said request;

referencing said source information against said profiles database to identify one of said plurality of agents to facilitate said communication; and

directing said communication to said identified agent who may then facilitate said call between said initiator and said desired recipient.

9. (Original) The media of claim 8, wherein receiving said request includes receiving said request through a communications network, said communications network including a voice network, data network, or video network.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said set of attributes include one or more of the following:

a language proficiency;

a gender;

a speaking rate;

a speaking style;

a typing speed; and

a desired attribute.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said source information includes one or more of the following:

- an indication of a source of said request;
- an Internet Protocol (IP) address;
- a message-request type;
- a message-request length;
- a request identifier;
- an information digit pair;
- an indication of a calling number from which the request originated;
- an indication of a called number to which the request was made;
- an X.25 label;
- an objects count; and
- a digit-parameter object.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein directing said communications to said identified agent includes placing said request in a queue based on said referencing.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for routing a communications request to help facilitate a call between a user and a desired recipient by making use of an intermediary agent ("agent"), the method comprising:

receiving said communications request from a user, wherein said communications request includes a request to ultimately reach said desired recipient;

retrieving a set of preferences associated with said user;

retrieving profile data related to a plurality of agents who may respond to said communications request to facilitate communications between said user and said desired recipient; and

routing said communications request to a specific agent, wherein said specific agent possesses attributes consistent with at least a portion of the set of preferences and profile data.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein said communications request is to reach a destination address, including an IP address or phone number.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein said communications request is a request to establish a communications link between at least two parties,

wherein a human agent is communicatively disposed between said at least two parties and facilitates persistent communication between said at least two parties.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said set of preferences are associated with an origination address of said request, said origination address including an IP address or a phone number.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein routing said communications request to a specific agent includes identifying said specific agent prior to when said routing requests reach a telephony server, thereby substantially eliminating any delay between receiving said communications request at said telephony server and directing said request to said identified agent.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for routing a communications request to help facilitate a call between a user and a desired recipient by making use of an intermediary agent ("agent") received through a teletype (TTY) device or destined to be communicated through a TTY device comprising:

receiving said communications request from said user, wherein said communications request includes a request to ultimately reach said desired recipient;

retrieving signaling information from said communications request;

receiving profile data related to a plurality of agents who may respond to said communications request to facilitate communications between said user and said desired recipient; and

based on said signaling information and said profile data, denoting a hierarchy of one or more of said plurality of agents to facilitate said communications request; and

routing said communications request to at least one of said one or more of said plurality of agents in said hierarchy, who is able to receive said communications request and facilitate said call.

19. (Original) The method claim 18, wherein said communications request is a request received through a telephone network, including a wireless-communications network, to reach a destination address, including an IP address or phone number.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein said signaling information includes packetized machine language messages related to said communications request.

21. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein said signaling information includes a source identifying a source of said communications request.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein said signaling information further includes a target address identifying a dialed number associated with said communications request.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein denoting said hierarchy includes identifying a single best agent to satisfy said communications request.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) A method for establishing a communications link between a set of persons with an intermediary agent facilitator in a hub-and-spoke format, where the agent is the hub and set persons are the spokes, the method comprising:

receiving a request to establish said communications link between said set of persons, wherein said request is to be directed to one of a plurality of receiving components;

identifying one of said plurality of receiving components to satisfy said request;

prior to communicating said request to said identified receiving component, identifying an agent from a plurality of agents to facilitate said communications link;

communicating said request to said identified receiving component, whereby said request can be routed to said identified agent immediately incident to being received by said receiving component; and

selecting a specific agent from said plurality of agents based on said set of preferences and said profile data prior to an initiation of said communications request.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein said one of a plurality of receiving components includes one or a plurality of call centers.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein identifying an agent comprises:

retrieving a set of attributes associated with a calling source prior to connecting a call by said calling source to said agent; and

retrieving profile data related to said plurality of agents prior to connecting said call to one of a plurality of agents.

28. (Currently Amended) A system for routing a communications request to help facilitate a call between a user and a desired recipient by making use of an intermediary agent ("agent"), said system comprising:

a preferences database for storing information related to calling preferences of ~~a caller~~ said user;

a profiles database for storing a set of attributes associated with a plurality of agents who facilitate calls between parties; and

one or more computer-readable media having computer-useable instructions embodied thereon for referencing said preferences database and said profiles database incident to receiving said communications request to designate an order of one or more of said agents to facilitate said communications request.

29. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein said computer-useable instructions include instructions to extract signaling information from said communications request.

30. (Original) The system of claim 29, wherein said signaling information identifies a source and a destination of said communications request.

31. (Original) The system of claim 30, said order of one or more of said agents includes a single agent best equipped to facilitate said communications request.

32. (Currently Amended) A method for enabling a deaf or hard-of-hearing person to communicate with another person over a communications network via a communications link by making use of an intermediary agent ("agent"), the method comprising:

receiving a request to establish said communications link between a user and a desired recipient, wherein at least one of said user and said desired recipient is deaf or hard-of-hearing;

monitoring a plurality of agents who may facilitate said communications request by serving as an intermediary;

extracting source information from said communications request; and
based on said monitoring and said source information, directing said
communications request to one or more of said plurality of agents.

33. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein said request is received by a
telephone network or data network, including the Internet.

34. (Original) The method of claim 33, wherein monitoring said plurality of
agents includes persistently observing the availability of said plurality of agents.

35. (Original) The method of claim 34, wherein monitoring said plurality of
agents further includes persistently observing a plurality of attributes related to said agents.

36. (Original) The method of claim 34, wherein extracting source information
from said communications request includes extracting signaling information.

37. (Original) The method of claim 36, wherein said signaling information
includes Signaling System 7 (SS7) information.

38. (Original) The method of claim 37, wherein directing said
communications request to one or more of said plurality of agents includes directing said
communications request to be placed in a queue to be received by one or said plurality of agents.

39. (Currently Amended) A method for routing a communications request to
help facilitate a call between an initiator and a desired recipient by making use of a plurality of
intermediary agents (“agents”), the method comprising;

retrieving a set of preferences associated with asaid initiator of said communications request;

retrieving profile data related to asaid plurality of agents who may respond to said communications request; and

matching said initiator to one or more of said agents based on a relationship between said userset of preferences and said profile data, wherein said one or more of said agents have attributes consistent with at least a portion of said set of preferences and profile data.

40. (Original) The method of claim 39, wherein matching said initiator to one or more of said agents includes comparing said set of preferences with said profile data and determining similarities between said preferences and said profile data.

41. (Currently Amended) One or more computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions embodied thereon for performing a method of routing a communications request to help facilitate communications between a plurality of users and a plurality of desired recipients by making use of a plurality of intermediary agents ("agents"), said method comprising:

providing a preferences database that contains a plurality of entries associated with asaid plurality of users;

providing a profiles database that contains a plurality of entries related to a plurality of agents who may respond to said communications request to facilitate said communications between said plurality of users and said plurality of desired recipients; and

matching said users to said agents based on a comparison between said entries of said preferences database and said entries of said profile database.